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Agency

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Environmental NEWS RELEASE



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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REMAINING FUNDS FROM ELLSWORTH PARK WATER HOOK-UP PROJECT SAVES DOWNERS GROVE AREA HOMEOWNERS \$2,000 EACH

CHICAGO (March 15, 2005) — U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 5, the state of Illinois, DuPage County and the village of Downers Grove said today that because the 2003-2004 effort to bring safe public drinking water to about 800 residents of unincorporated Downers Grove was completed well under budget, remaining funds will be used to pay for a \$2,000 per home village connection charge.

Prior to the project, the homes had been using private water wells that were contaminated or threatened by ground water contamination from the Ellsworth Industrial Park. The contamination was identified through a series of Illinois EPA sampling projects beginning in May 2001. The contaminants of concern — trichloroethylene and tetrachloroethylene, commonly known as TCE and PCE, are degreasing solvents used widely by industry.

The project was overseen and partially funded by EPA, Illinois EPA, DuPage County and the village of Downers Grove. The majority of the funding came from a group of 14 companies that operated businesses in the Ellsworth Industrial Park and committed up to \$4.275 million to fund the connections and seal approximately 850 private wells.

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Under the Aug. 8, 2003, administrative order on consent with EPA, developed in partnership with the state and local agencies, funds from the group of 14 companies would help pay for all hook-up costs except for the \$2,000 fee charged by the village to all new customers. A number of public comments on the agreement requested that any of the \$4.275 million not needed to connect the public water be used to help pay the new customer fee. Though EPA could not legally require that, the Agency agreed to do whatever it could to shift any excess funds to ease the burden on the homeowners.

Downers Grove allowed the residents the option to either pay the \$2,000 up front or in interest-free installments for a three-year period on their water bills. The group of companies will provide the funding to Downers Grove to reimburse those expenses and cover all future payments.

Site documents are available for review at the Downers Grove Public Library, 1050 Curtiss St., and at www.epa.gov/region5/sites/ellsworth. For more information, contact EPA Community Involvement Coordinator Mike Joyce, (312) 353-5546, or Illinois EPA Community Relations Coordinator Carol Fuller, (217) 524-8807.

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